

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2513

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Commerce & Labor

**Title:** An act relating to protecting the title of interior design.

**Brief Description:** Regulating interior designers.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Hudgins, Holmquist and Pettigrew.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Commerce & Labor: 1/29/04, 2/5/04 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Establishes a system of registration for interior designers, and sets criteria for becoming registered.
- Allows only those who are registered to use the title interior designer; however others may practice interior design.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; McMorris, Ranking Minority Member; Holmquist, Hudgins and McCoy.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Condotta, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Crouse.

**Staff:** Susan Kavanaugh (786-7106).

**Background:**

Interior design is not regulated in Washington. Anyone may do interior design work and anyone may use the title interior designer.

As they are not required to register, the number of individuals who do interior design as a profession is not known for certain. A coalition of design professionals estimates there are 850 interior designers in Washington and the Department of Licensing (Department) estimates the number at 1,000 to 1,500.

The National Council for Interior Design Qualification (Council), a professional organization, certifies interior designers based on examination, experience, and education.

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### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

A system of regulation for interior designers is established in the Department and qualifications for registering as an interior designer are set.

Qualifications. To register as a interior designer, an individual must meet the following requirements:

- be certified by the Council;
- have a total of six years of work experience and formal education in interior design, of which at least two years must be formal education in the field; and
- pay the licensing fee established by the Department.

Grandfathering. Until July 1, 2007, an individual who has, prior to the effective date of the act, worked for 15 or more years as an interior designer and either completed at least two years of formal education in the field or been certified by the Council, may also register as an interior designer.

Reciprocity. The Department may grant registration to an individual who is certified by the Council and registered or licensed by another state that has qualifications equal to those of Washington.

Continuing Education. Registered interior designers must complete 10 hours of continuing education every two years.

Restriction on Use of Title. Only registered interior designers may use the title interior designer in Washington. However, other individuals may practice interior design.

Interior design is defined. Registered interior designers are required to sign and seal their documents and include their registration number when submitting documents to public authorities. Violation of the act, or rules adopted under it, is made a misdemeanor, and penalties and enforcement described. It is noted that this chapter does not affect the practice of either architecture or engineering.

### **Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The point after which only those who are registered may use the title "interior designer" is moved back by three years until July 1, 2007.

Provisions regarding grandfathering are shifted to: (a) require 15 (rather than 10) years of experience in the field, (b) allow completion of the national certification to substitute for formal education in interior design, and (c) allow an additional year, until July 1, 2007, to complete the grandfathering process.

The definition of interior design is condensed. Design documents prepared by a registered interior designer be accepted by state and local building departments as submissions for securing a building permit. References to building officials verifying the registration of interior designers are deleted. It is noted that the chapter does not affect the practice of architecture or engineering. Language, similar to statute regulating architecture, is added regarding penalties and enforcement for violations of the act.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** (In support) This is a title act, it does not prevent anyone from practicing interior design. It helps protect the public welfare. It is important to recognize design professionals who are qualified by examination, experience, and education. Interior design affects not only quality of life, but also public safety. Interior design addresses issues such as adequate egress, fire safety, access for people who have disabilities, aging in place, and risk management. Though it overlaps with other professions, interior design is unique and merits recognition by the state. Many interior designers are getting certified, and they deserve to be recognized for it. This bill promotes commerce, as it provides information for consumers without restricting practice. Remodeling is expensive; it is important that a customer know whether an interior designer is knowledgeable about building codes and has real expertise. The Interior Design Coalition of Washington, representing 850 designers from three organizations, supports this bill.

**Testimony Against:** (Opposed) Architects have been working on this issue at a national level. Architects would like to see aspects of this bill that actually affect practice removed and would also like a tighter definition of interior design. There is no provision for gaining certification by experience. The formal education requirement should be removed. The process used by an accrediting body should be considered. A person with 30 years' experience in the interior design field, and formal education in architecture, would not be able to qualify for registration.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Hudgins, prime sponsor; Chris Johnson; Susan Stanfield, American Society of Interior Designers/Interior Design Coalition of Washington; Ernest Rhoads, Interior Design Coalition of Washington; and Tom Nielsen, Registered Architect and Design Educator.

(Opposed) Mary Mauerman, American Institute of Architects; and Cliff Webster, Architects & Engineers Legislative Council.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.